

**Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554**

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**FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF SECRETARY**

In the Matter of

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Telephone Number Portability

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CC Docket No. 95-116
RM 8535

REPLY COMMENTS OF MFS COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY, INC.

MFS Communications Company, Inc. ("MFS"), by its undersigned counsel, hereby submits its reply comments concerning the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking issued in this docket, FCC 95-284 (released July 13, 1995) (the "*Notice*").

In its initial comments, MFS set forth in detail its position on the issues identified in the *Notice*, including many of the specific proposals and contentions set forth in the comments of other parties. Accordingly, these reply comments will be limited to discussing certain specific matters contained in initial comments that have not previously been addressed by MFS.

1. The Pacific Bell Survey

Pacific Bell attached to its initial comments a voluminous survey purporting to demonstrate that "the competitive necessity of number portability has been vastly overstated." Pacific Comments at 3. With all due respect, MFS draws the opposite conclusion from the Pacific survey, and agrees with the conclusions drawn in the Comments of Sprint Corporation at 5-7 and Appendix 1 thereto. Pacific seems to think it is a minor matter for new entrants in the local exchange market to forego "only" 10 percentage points of market share and "only" 12 percent of their potential revenues due to customer resistance to changing telephone numbers. For

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companies that are making a large capital investment and taking a huge risk to enter new markets where they must compete against entrenched monopolists such as Pacific Bell, however, these are enormous impediments to competitive success.

Pacific Bell's insistence that competition can develop even in the absence of number portability is eerily reminiscent of the pre-divestiture Bell System's claim that lack of dialing parity was not an unreasonable impediment to interexchange competition. In that instance, of course, the Commission determined that "unequal access" was in fact sufficiently harmful to new entrants to justify a 45 percent discount in access charges. If the Commission were to heed the arguments of Pacific and other LECs to "go slow" in implementing local number portability, it would be more than reasonable to consider mandating a similar discount for new entrants' access to incumbents' local exchange networks, to compensate them for the competitive handicap imposed by incumbents' control of telephone numbers.

2. The AT&T/MCI Proposal


In their initial comments, AT&T and MCI each proposed a two-stage implementation of local number portability, using the MCIMetro "Carrier Portability Code" method as an interim step and the AT&T "Local Routing Number" method as the long-term solution.

MFS endorses the concept of a two-step process for implementing local number portability, and also agrees that the LRN approach appears to be the preferable long-term methodology. The LRN method makes the most efficient use of numbering resources and can be implemented relatively easily on most existing switch platforms. However, the LRN method probably cannot be implemented for two to three years due to the need, first, to develop standards for the SS7

signaling information that must be transmitted as part of this method, and second, for switch manufacturers to provide the software needed to implement the new signaling protocol. Rather than force new entrants to use decidedly inferior number retention "substitutes," such as Remote Call Forwarding, for this extended period, MFS agrees with the AT&T/MCI approach of adopting another database technology as a short-term solution until LRN can be implemented.

At this time, MFS believes that both MCIMetro's CPC technology and the alternative approach of Stratus Computer and U.S. Intelco should be considered for use as the short-term solution. As noted in MFS' initial comments, trials of both technologies are scheduled to begin within a few months in New York State. It would be premature to select one of these database systems over the other before the results of these real-world trials become available.

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I hereby certify that on this 12th day of October 1995, copies of Reply Comments of MFS Communications Company, Inc. were served by first class mail, postage prepaid, on the following:

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